A

Scotch Gentleman's

LETTER,

TO

Doctor *Sacheverel*,

Questioning what

SERMONS

May be properly Esteem'd

Infamous Libels.

LONDON,

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A Question to Dr. *Sacheverel*, &c.

SIR,

I Received your *Question* this Morning, and since to Resolve it as it ought, may at this time be look'd upon as a piece of Presumption, in any Person to undertake, since the Eyes and Hearts of the whole Kingdom are upon the actions of our present Parliament, touching their Proceedings relating to Dr. *Sacheverel*'s two Sermons, the one Preached at St. *Pauls*, and the other at the *Assizes* at *Liceſter*; yet not to leave the said Question wholly unresolv'd, & to oblige you, it won't be much amiss, if I give you the Sentiments of a cunning *Scotch* Politician in this Case, *viz.* The Learned and never to be forgotten Mr. *Drummond* of *Hau-throndon*'s Opinion Touching; what he writ to a Noble *English* Lord upon the same Subject, *viz.* What Letters, Sermons, Pamphlets, and Pieces of Poetry are, and ought to be taken and esteemed among Emperors, Kings, Princes, Potentates, and Noblemen, for Infamous Libels, and what are not: And how the said Emperors, *&c.* have dealt with such Pieces and their Authors when found out; and if you happen to agree with my Historian touching the same, I hope, you have your desired End; and perchance, it may in some Measure, set the Nation into so much of that Affair, as may give Satisfaction in General to all such as long to be resolved of the said Question; which, that it may do, shall be the constant Wishes of him that is, Sir, your very humble Servant,

A. B.

Mr. Drummod's *Apologetical Letter, touching the aforesaid Question, which he wrote to a Noble Lord the* 2. *of* March, 1635. *as you will find it in his* Memorials of State, *at the latter end of his History of* Scotland, *from the Year* 1423, *until the Year* 1542, *&c. With a Prefaratory Introduction, taken out of the Records of that Nation, by Mr.* Hill *of* Grays-Inn, *and printed in the Year* 1682, *at* London, *from* Page 358, *to* 367. *And thus he begins.*

My Lord, (not naming the Lord's Name.)

IN a time when Men, for reading of Papers concerning State, are challeng'd, it must be a great hazard to write them, and a greater, to send them from Home, and the most, to

send

nd them to one ſo near the Helm, as is your Lordſhip, who e next Day, perhaps, may put in the Prince's Hands what is nt him.

And then, though what is ſet down, may be free of great ults, yet muſt it paſs and be underſtood, as it pleaſeth the ince to Conſtrue it. But what *Marius Geminus* ſaid to *Ju-s Cæſar*, may be ſaid to King *Charles*; Cæſar *qui apud te au-t dicere, magnitudinem tuam Ignorant; qui non audent humani-em.* And writing to your Lordſhip, I know to whom I rite.

Thus the Way of Glory lying near the Gates of Danger, ave adventur'd this Sheet of Paper, of which I beſeech your rdſhip to be both Judge and Patron.

What a Noiſe hath been rais'd in this Country, by proſecu-ng a piece of Writing, ſuppos'd to be Derogatory to the onour of the King's Majeſty. No Times have been with-t ſuch Men.

Wiſe Men keep their Thoughts lock'd up in the Cabinets their Breaſts, and ſuffer the Faults of Time patiently; ols rail, cry out, but amend nothing.

Whatever hath been given for the putting off Lybellers to e extremity of the Law, I would ſay (with all humble eſpect to grave Stateſmen) that in a Matter of a Calumny d Reproach with Subjects, a Prince can do nothing more fit-g his own Fame and Reputation, than to ſlight and con-mn them, as belonging nothing to him; and that 'twere tter to neglect, than to be curious in ſearching after the uthors. So *Theodoſius*, *Honorius*, *Audacius*, were wont to y, If any Man ſpeak ill of the *Emperor*, if he doth it of ghtneſs, it is to be contemn'd; if of Madneſs, to be pit-d; if of Injury, to be remitted; and *Alexander the Great* d to ſay, *Regium eſt benefacere & male audire*; or as *Plutarch* porteth it, *Regium eſt a quibus male audias, magis eſſe iis bene-um.* *Nero*, (otherwiſe, a terrible Prince) when that Paſ-l was out againſt him?

Quis neget Æneæ magna deſtirpe Neronem?
Suſtulit hic Matrem, ſuſtulit ille Patrem.

e took no notice of it, followed not the Writers with a-Puniſhment, ſought them not; as ye find in *Suetonius Et ſdam ad Judicem delatos ad Senatum, aſſici graviore pœna prohi-*

buit

hibuit. Writings which we ſcorn and make none account, o themſelves vaniſh and turn into nought. If we chafe and fret it would appear, that we have been therein touched, and vive ly ſee in them our own Faults and Miſdemeanour Tax'd an laid open.

If theſe Papers for the King's Honour, were not to be ſeen and Read; or if they did derogate to the Fame of the Nobles why were they not ſuppreſs'd and hidden? But is this th way to ſuppreis and hide them? To Impriſon, Arraign, Ba niſh, Execute the Perſons near whom they are found? Or, i it not rather to turn them a piece of the Story of the Time to make ſuch a Noiſe about them, and by ſeeking to avoi the Smoak to fall into the Fire? What we ſhould moſt evi and ſhun, to be the Authors to bring them upon our ow Heads.

What gain'd Queen *Elizabeth* the Three and twentieth o her Reign, by cutting off the Hands of *Stubs* and *Page*, on Scaffold, for writing that Book againſt her Marriage with th Duke of *Anjou*, ſave out of Horrour of that new and unpra ctis'd Puniſhment, the People acknowledg'd her to be the righ and not uncertain Daughter of King *Henry* the 8th; and ſh began to be feared, where before ſhe was beloved of her Sub jects? Whom a People fear they hate, and whom they hate they wiſh taken away.

A Prince ſhould be more violent in revenging other Men' Quarrels than his own. That unfortunate Duke of *Buckingham* in the time of *Richard* the Third, could make good uſe againſt the Succeſſion of the Race of *Edward* the Fourth, i his Speech to the Commons of *London*, by remembring them of the ſtrange Proceedings of King *Edward* againſt a Merchant named *Burdet*; who dwelling at the Sign of the *Crown*, an having ſaid to his Son, that after his Death he would make him Heritor of the Crown, meaning his own Houſe, was fo this Tale, four hours after Quarter'd, which Blot is eternally fixt to that Prince.

In the Reign of King *Richard* the Third, who had ev known that Paſquil againſt three of his Courtiers, *Lovel*, *Ratcliff*, and *Catsby*.

The Rat, *the* Cat, *and* Lovel *that* Dog,
Rule all England *under the Hog*.

If his Tyranny had not been mightily extended againſt th poor Gentleman, *Collingburn*, the maker of it, ye will ſay

t is in a Prince's Power to suppress such Papers by Authority hat is the only way to make all Men seek them, and being ound, highly prize them.

Tacitus telleth us of certain Verses of *Fabricius Vientо*, a-gainst Churchmen and Senators, which were condemn'd to be urnt, as long as the Reading and finding of them was dan-gerous, they were much sought for, and with danger Read: But being afterwards licentiated to be Read, and the liberty of having them obtain'd, they were forgotten, and no Man ar ed for them.

No Prince how great soever, can abolish Pens, nor will Memorials of Ages be extinguish'd by present Power; the Posterity rendring to every one, his due Honour and Blame.

It is true, that great Men should direct their great Care to Fame, and hold nothing more dear unto them, and he who contemneth it, neglecteth those Actions by which it is ac-quired; but it is pity Men should be more careful and studious of Fame for times to come, in which they are not, than of Honesty in the present times in which they live.

Sometimes it is great Wisdom in a Prince, not to rej & nd disdain them who freely tell him his Duty, and open to him his Misdemeanours to the Common-wealth, and the Sur-mises and Umbrages of his People and Council, for the mending Disorders, and bettering the Form of his Govern-ment. As if a Man should tell King *Charles*, That there is none in all his Kingdoms here, can reckon himself Lord of his own Goods, amongst so many Taxes and Taillages, so much Pilling and Polling, so that Subst nce is daily plucked nd pilled from honest Men, to be lavished out amongst Un-thrifts, that as *Thucydides* writes of the great Plague in his ime at *Athens*, Men seeing no hopes of Safety, spent all they had in one Night: So the uncertainty of enjoying and ho'ding what they have, for the present draws the Thrifty and Un-thrifty to one end; for no Man being sure of Lands, less of Moneys, every Man is turned into a deplorable careless ees of his Estate.

As to tell him also about this Subject, who is the Subject of this Letter, the People say, Kings seeking Treason, shall find Land, and seeking Land, shall find Treason.

The denial of a Price's Desire was the destruction of an nnocent *Naboth*; the Voice of a People should not be kept up from the Ears of a Prince,

As

As to unfold to a King, if Usury be not lawful at all (for it is against Natue, that Money should beget Money, and not so tolerate it by the Mosaical Law, and in *Ezekiel*, cap. 18. v. 13. It is reckon'd amongst the roaring Sins, such as are Adultry and Bloodshed, it being a Sin in the person of Subjects, it is a greater Sin in the person of a Prince; for any Sin is greater in the person of a Prince, than in the persons of Subjects; as Sin is worse and greater in Angels than Men.

Nothing is profitable to a Prince which is not joyned with Honour; and the State of Kings, unless it stand with Pureness and Fidelity, it cannot subsist in Power.

As to tell King *Charles*, what a strange thing it is to swear a Man for the true value of his own Substance, since the valuing of Subject's Lands and Rents, Rents were never less, nor Lands the worse; a secret Scourge of God having followed it, the Country scarce affording Bread for the Labourers of it.

Remember *David*'s numbring the People. In the times of King *Henry* th 8th, *Renate, Corain. Volesio*, this was held uncouth, strange, and Terrible.

A Prince should be advertiz'd, That the Hatred, and Distrust of Men's present Estates and Fortunes setteth them on Work, and maketh them exceeding earnest to seek Novations; for finding themselves plunged in the Beggery of a miserable Estate, as many do believe, it turneth not them base, nor keepeth them under, but raiseth in them a mad desire to change their Fortune; and this hath been the Ensign of Male-Contents, to attempt, and enterprize dangerous Matters; for it hath often been found, that nothing hath sooner armed a People than Poverty, and Poverty hath never so often been brought upon a Nation, by the unfruitfulness of the Earth, by Disasters of the Seas, and other human Accidents, as by the Avirice of the Officers and Favourites of Princes; who are brought foolishly to believe, that by tearing of the Skins off the Flock, they shall turn the Shepherd Rich. It is the property of a good Shepherd not to share often his Flock, and ever to Milk them. Nor is it of a Prince, to Gall, and perpetually afflict a People by a terrible *Exchequer*.

Brutorum se Regem facit qui premit suos. Now in such Theams it were not evil in Princes, to read *Jan Mariana*, and *George Buchanan*'s Peice, *de jure Regni apud Scotos*, for his own private, and the publick Good.

Princes

Princes have in their Actions this Disadvantage, that in matter of Wrong and Injuries, concerning their Subjects; tho' they sometime suffer, by reason of their Power, being thought stronger. They are ever esteemed to do wrong, which should move them to abstain from all violent Courses, and think really, their Subjects Losses is their own.

Ye will then say, the Case of Princes is pitiful, if Writers of *Infamous Libels* be not rigorously punished; without all question, the Law is just and necessary against them. But in some Cases, good Princes never follow the Rigour and Extremity of Punishment set down by their Laws, no, not against the nautiest Subjects, and especially when the Cause concerneth their own Particulars.

There is much to be consider'd in the Convoy of such Libels. If they contain Truths, there is small Wrong in such Papers, as to call Mary Magdalen *a Sinner*, Matthew *a Publican*, Thomas *a Misbeliever*, Paul *a Prosecutor*, Peter *a Denyer of his Master, and the rest Fugitives from him; and these are to be slighted and passed over, if they contain mixed Truths and Appearances, they may be neglected; if they admit no Interpretation, but true and flat Railing, then is a Prince's Patience to be try'd. and the Libel to be scorned. If they propound Novelty, and Causes of Sedition upon apparent Grounds, they are to be answer'd, and by good Reason to be overthrown. If they be presented by way of Supplication, for Redressing of Errors in the State, it is a Question whether they be Libels or not.*

That Supplication of Humphry *Duke of* Gloucester, *to King* Henry *the Sixth, of* England, *against the Cardinal of* Winchester, *Archbishop of* York, *may have place amongst Libels; for the King is Taxed there of notable Dotage. As that by the Council of the Cardinal he had set at Liberty, the King of Scots, suffer'd his Jewels and Houshold Stuff to be Sold, granted the Cardinal a Charter of Pardon, for taking up his Rents, which were sufficient to have maintained the Wars in* France *many Years. The setting of the Duke of* Orleance *at Liberty, against the Duke of* Burgundy, *the great Friend of the* English, *and many other Points. Yet this being done by way of Supplication, for Redress of Wrongs in the State, he was not threatned for (perhaps) Verity, but remitted to the Council, and what for Fear, and what for Favour, (saith the* English *History) the whole Matter was winked at, touching the Duke, and nothing said against the Cardinal,* Miseria summa ubi injuria conqueri pro delicto habetur.

Those

Thoſe who ſet their Prince on Work, to follow and pur
ſue ſuch an idle Piece of Paper, if they had fair Judges, an
powerful Enemies near the Court, may themſelves be brough
within Compaſs of that ſame Puniſhment, which they woul
have laid upon others; as *Perillus* was brought to take an Eſſa
of his own Brazen Bull: For no better are they which relat
Divulgate, and are Occaſioners to have Infamous Libels pub
liſh'd, than they which write them. And theſe Men hav
done what in them lay to make the Paper publick, and hav
Recorded in the Annals of this Kingdom, to all Ages, wha
ſhould have been ſmothered in the darkeſt Pits of Oblivion
They have often aſſembled the King's Majeſty, Subjects to th
great Charges and vain Attendance of many Noblemen an
Barons, to ſee their Paſſions put forward. They have buſie
the Prince to condemn others, by Power, (a Miniſter of thei
Attempts) and not purged himſelf to Poſterity; for ſuch
Paper ſhould have been anſwered by a Pen, not by an Axe
There is no Prince living, no, nor dead, but Subjects do
both write and ſpeak of, after their Fantaſies. *Auguſtus*, i
a Letter to *Tiberius*, *Noli in hac re indagare & nimium indagar
quemquam eſſe di me loquatur male; ſatis eſt enim ſi hoc habemu
ne quis malefacere poſſit.* And *Tiberius* in the beginning of h
Reign (tho after he killed *Cremutius Cordus* for Words) wa
wont to ſay, *In Civitate libera linguam quoque libram eſſe debere*
Princes have never troubled themſelves much about Talkers; weak
Spirits cannot ſuffer the Liberty of Judgments, nor the Indiſcretion
of Tongues. To ſtrive to reſtrain them, is the Work of buſie Bo
dies, who would fain have ſomewhat to do, but know not what, nor
how to help Domitian *to kill Gnats with his Dagger, having won*
Points and Concluſions heretofore in the State beyond their Hopes
they began to foſter greater and ſhameful Hopes beyond the reach of
all Obtaining.

A Prince ſhould be ſuch towards his Subjects, as he ſhould have
God Eternal towards him, who full of Mercy ſpaireth Peopled Ci
ties, and darteth his Thunders amongſt the vaſt and wild Moun
tains.

FINIS.